

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs**

Student and Exchange Visitor Travel Procedures

In keeping with the U.S. Government's policy of "secure borders and open doors", effective 1 May 2006 the Consular Section is instituting *expedited visa processing* procedures for students (F, M visas) and exchange visitors (J visas). In order to take advantage of these procedures, students and exchange visitors are now *required* to use the [**Electronic Visa Application Form \(DS-156\) in English**](#). Handwritten or typed applications will no longer be accepted.

At the time of their application, qualified travelers with properly completed Electronic Visa Application Forms, and all other necessary documentation, will be interviewed immediately. Their visas may be processed within 24 hours, and wherever possible will be issued on the same day.

Click here for more information on [**Visa Application Procedures**](#).

The Consular Section is committed to facilitating timely travel to the U.S. for students and exchange visitors by making every effort to assign the earliest possible appointment time(s). Please note that all travelers need to demonstrate their eligibility to receive a U.S. visa, and that it is the traveler's responsibility to make timely arrangements.

1 Priority Scheduling: When the normal visa application schedule allows, appointments will be granted immediately regardless of circumstances. Students and exchange visitors (with properly-completed Electronic Visa Application Forms) will enjoy priority in scheduling over temporary visitors at all times.

2. Expedited Procedures: Outside the normal application schedule, students and exchange visitors who need to travel urgently or immediately must call the Consular Section in order to ask for an expedited appointment. Every effort will be made to accommodate such requests in order to ensure that students can make the start date(s) of their studies.

3. Last-Minute Procedures: Outside the normal application schedule, or when timely appointments are not available (i.e. at peak travel times, such as summer or holidays), "last-minute" requests, caused by poor planning or preparation on the part of the student/traveler, will *not* be considered as urgent and will *not* be considered for expedited appointments.

Instead, in the interests of fairness to all visa applicants, such requests will be placed on a waiting list in the Consular Section, and will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis as and when prior appointments are cancelled.

However, even last-minute student and exchange visitor applicants will be given priority over all temporary visitor applicants on the waiting list.